

META Corp and Fatum Insurance support the Search and Rescue Foundation Aruba
A fundraising premiere of "The Guardian" spotlights their important work



On Thursday evening, September 28, a premiere showing of the film "The Guardian" starring Kevin Costner and Ashton Kutcher filled two of the theaters at the Seaport Cinemas as a special fundraising effort for the Search and Rescue Foundation Aruba (SARFA.)

This entertaining evening, hosted by Meta Corp and Fatum Insurance Company, included a wine and cheese party on the docks of the Renaissance Marketplace afterwards, where attendees had the opportunity to meet the real thing, Eric Bednorz, AST one (Aviation Survival Technician,) with the U.S. Coast Guard and a rescue swimmer as depicted in the movie.

Officer Bednorz, stationed out of Borinquen, Puerto Rico, is enjoying a brief stay in Aruba with his wife Paulette as a guest of SARFA. He is on the island to help spotlight the importance of the work of these selfless men who risk their lives almost daily to help those who are stranded at sea. He reports that the film was quite accurate in its depiction of their training and techniques, though admittedly, "Hollywoodized." During his stay, he has plans to tour the coastline with the Coastguard of Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, comparing notes.

Diego Frankel, Managing Director of Fatum Insurance stated they were proud to sponsor the event by guaranteeing the full house and additional funds for the important work of SARFA. Pierre Kock, president of SARFA and Ruben Croes, co-founder, were present to explain the challenges of such an organization, particular on an island nation where old time fisherman often go to sea without even the most basic equipment required by law.

"We used to do about 125 searches a year," reports Ruben Croes, "but with classes we have been giving to the fishermen, we are getting it down to about eighty-five, now." He also revealed that the expense of running a single search, when one considers the cost in manpower and equipment will usually mount to hundreds of thousands of florin. He estimated that a recent search, which lasted sixteen days and had a dozen helicopters in the air cost close to one and a half million Arubian florins. The Search and Rescue volunteers donate their time, but the equipment is costly to use and maintain, so Thursday's event is only the beginning of a call for support by the community for the work of the team.

As for the film, "The Guardian," after listening to the real-life exploits of Officer Bednorz of a recent rescue where he personally pulled seventeen individuals out of the water, four of which were from a rescue boat that had floundered, one must admire the courage and selflessness of the rescue swimmers portrayed in the film. Most individuals do not give much consideration to the training and determination of search and rescue personnel until they have a need for them, but are certainly thankful they are there when the occasion arises that they need them. It would appear that attending the film "The Guardian" will not only be entertaining, but enlightening as well.